**Informed consent**

Informed consent is a vital aspect in the process of treatment and care providence where a healthcare provider is required to make a patient understand the risks, benefits, and alternatives of a procedure or intervention to be undertaken. This enables the patient to make a competent and voluntary decision on whether to or not undergo the given procedure or intervention. It is the patient’s right to make a decision on whatever treatment or procedure he or she is to undergo, therefore it is an obligation for healthcare providers to ensure informed consent is adhered to accordingly.

To ensure adherence to informed consent, there are a number of informed consent elements for guidance;

**Elements of informed consent**

First, the patient should be fully educated on the nature of the procedure they are to undergo in terms of timeframes, alterations, possible outcomes and so much more depending on a particular procedure. He or she should be made to understand all the materials and medication to be used for a given procedure or treatment. Secondly, there are risks as well as benefits to any given procedure or treatment intervention that a patient should be informed about. Patients understanding the risks and accepting the procedure or intervention will avoid blaming the medical service provider if the consequences of the risks take effect, and understanding the benefits of the procedure makes the patient choose the right path to recovery.

The third element is; reasonable alternatives patients should be given knowledge of the availability of different approaches to their treatment to allow them to get a chance to choose what they prefer and what is good for them, considering time, cost, outcomes, and other important factors. The fourth element is; the risks and benefits of alternatives, Similar to the risks and benefits of a given procedure or intervention, their alternatives also have their own risks and benefits that a client and the service provider should consider before choosing the appropriate one to undertake.

Lastly, patients should be assessed to determine whether they understand the given elements for them to make informed and competent decisions for treatment, otherwise, they should be assisted to make the decisions or the procedure is followed according to set policies in the facility.

**Breach of confidentiality**

Confidentiality is the safeguarding of information between a patient and the service provider from reaching a third party or unauthorized persons. However, there are circumstances under which confidentiality can be breached; Patient’s consent to start with, this where the patient gives permission to the service provider to disclose his or her information to a third party for various reasons, for example, insurance companies for the reimbursement of funds for treatment and research purposes.

Secondly is the requirement by law, court of law or any other government authority can order the breaching of confidentiality by disclosure of patient information in court when there is a court case concerning the care service or an investigation on negligence in treatment. Thirdly, confidentiality can be breached for the sake of public interest. The human service provider is allowed to disclose patient information for public interest for instance the notification of an infectious disease. This will caution the public on the need to be careful not to contract the disease.

Lastly, transfer of a patient from one clinic to another or a hospital to another the doctor has to disclose information for the continuation of treatment.

**Relevance of breach of confidentiality on professionals’ duty to warn**

It is of great importance for professionals working with HIV-positive patients to breach confidentiality as their duty to warn clients and their partners about safety. For example, learning that clients engage in unsafe sexual practices, endangering the life of the other person and therefore the need to warn. This, therefore, informs the essence of limitations in confidentiality and consent agreements in order to protect others from potential harm and ensure that the client’s partner engages in sexual intercourse consensually. The professional, therefore, has the responsibility to warn others against exposure while also ensuring the confidentiality of the client.

There are considerations for professionals in order to deliver warnings appropriately, first, understand legal and ethical guidelines regarding partner notification and disclosure of HIV status. Secondly, professionals should seek informed consent from the client before disclosing their status to others. Thirdly, seeking professional assistance from HIV care experts, their experience will provide guidance on the appropriate steps to be taken while safeguarding confidentiality. Finally, support and counseling provide emotional support to the partner and help them deal with challenges that may arise.